

Journal of the House

ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY of the STATE OF MISSOURI

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

FIRST DAY, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2024

ADDRESS BY SPEAKER DEAN PLOCHER

I would like to wish everyone a happy New Year and welcome all of you back to the People's House.

As we all know, Missouri is the show me state. We therefore can't just talk a big game but must show results.

I've thought about my time here in the House over the past eight years.

I am proud to say that we have:

- Cut income taxes several times – To give the people back their money.
- Protected life – and eliminated abortion in Missouri!
- In 2023 there were 0 abortions.
- Defended our 2nd amendment rights with some of the strongest laws in the country with Stand Your Ground and The Castle Doctrine.
- We passed the NO PATIENT LEFT ALONE ACT and pushed back against federal overreach regarding COVID visitation and protected our citizens' rights to have an advocate by their side in a hospital.

This past year we continued to show Missourians why we are here:

- By passing many conservative priorities and a fiscally sound budget that made solid investments for the future of our state.
- I am proud to say that we cut taxes for Missourians, provided real relief for our seniors, improved access to healthcare for our most vulnerable, and protected our children from indoctrination and mutilation.
- We stood by our budget priorities and supported our men and women in law enforcement and our veterans, while standing behind investments in our state's infrastructure to keep our state moving forward.

These are things we all can be proud of!!!

Today marks the formal beginning of this year's legislative efforts. And when I think about all the things I have seen over my eight years that keep us from achieving the goal of making the welfare of the people the supreme law, things like:

- Party influences
- Regional interest
- Political self-interest
- Pandering for an election year,

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these forces will be working against us even more this year, and keeping the welfare of the people the supreme law should be first!

The desire to have a bill passed with your name on it, to bring home the bacon for your district or region will be great. But I also know that we don't want these petty issues to cause bills to die when Missouri's interests are at stake.

In this election year, I'm confident we will all do what we believe is the right thing, and I want each of us, Republicans and Democrats, to come together and vigorously debate the laws that affect our citizens.

Last year we worked together to pass good laws. We had fair, open and honest debates on key bills that passed this House. I want to thank the Lady from Greene and the Gentlemen from Jackson that despite disagreements they worked together.

We must continue to treat each other as friends, respect each other's intentions, and work together to improve our great state.

With the second legislative session of the 102nd General Assembly beginning today, I know there is more to accomplish:

- First, our citizens should be safe!
- We must fight crime and improve public safety - we need to recruit and retain more police officers.
- This will help our continued efforts to reduce violent crime and protect our citizens.
- We must fight the scourge fentanyl trade.
- We should always strive to improve our children's future! One prominent key to building on the American dream is education. Getting parents more involved in their child's education is a must!

To accomplish this, providing parents choices and passing a Parents Bill of Rights would be a great step to help Missouri's parents be more involved and help our children achieve the American dream.

And part of the American dream is owning your own home.

We know it is difficult saving for a down payment and making monthly payments to buy a home. So why are we leaving unchecked egregious property tax increases that are serving to erode the American dream? I will be forming a special committee to review the reassessment process in Missouri and find a way to control these increases.

We must all work together to protect our homeowners, particularly our seniors and those on fixed incomes.

This will be a different year for the budget.

Gone are the federal dollars thrown at the states that have helped grow inflation. We must again budget wisely and protect the surplus we've worked so hard to build up.

The consensus revenue estimate is almost flat.

We need to be responsible with the surplus and ensure Missouri is prepared for a future rainy day because they always come. Along the lines of fiscal responsibility, we must also pass the Federal Reimbursement Allowance (FRA). The FRA has been continually passed in Missouri since 1992 by both parties and not passing it this year would be an almost 3.5 billion dollar annual hit to our state budget. I ask you to join me in passing the FRA because we simply cannot let Missourians down.

Additionally, many other important issues must be addressed:

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- IP reform.
- Protecting our energy production and infrastructure.
- Helping small businesses.
- Protecting our citizens from unlawful immigration.
- Reducing healthcare costs and protecting access to healthcare providers.
- Continuing to protect the property rights of Missourians.
- We must acknowledge the legitimacy, independence, and our support of Israel and its people just as fellow Missourian and President Harry Truman did in 1948.
- And finally, we must ensure the survival and success of Missouri's farmers. After all farming is our state's #1 industry.

We are all here because we believe in public service. Let us place statesmanship and the welfare of the people before petty politics and personal interests.

I know we can work together and get things done. We've done it before, we'll do it again.

And when we do, we will keep Missouri moving forward and meet the challenges our state faces and seek the opportunities to make Missouri the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

May God bless this session, the House of Representatives, and the great state of Missouri! Thank you!